



Sensory Circuits

Sensory circuits is a brilliant way to keep children active and improve brain processing.

These activity ideas can easily be done at home be used to break up the day.

In school, we use this to help children activate all parts of the brain and get them ready to learn. We also use it for children who like physical breaks to help them to focus on learning. On top of that, it is a great way to build co-ordination, balance, gross motor control and collaboration skills. Below is some more information about it.

Sensory circuits is a physical motor programme which consists of 3 different activities: alerting (activities that make the head move direction quickly); organising (activities that are more physically demanding) and calming (which calm the children's body and mind, helping them feel ready for the next part of the day)

Important note: you MUST do the activities in the right order: alerting activities, organising activities then calming activities.



Some of this equipment is suggested for some of the activities, but you can be creative and use alternatives. I have put some ideas in brackets.

Trampet (normal trampoline can be used. If you don't have either of these at home, you can ask your child to sit on a yoga ball and throw / catch the bean bag, They will still have to work on balancing on and co-ordinating two different actions)

Yoga ball (you can use a space hopper or a large inflatable beach ball instead)

Bean bags and balls (any safe object can be used, even a cuddly toy to throw and catch)

Skipping rope (any rope that is safe to use)

Order of activities 1. Alerting

The first activities should be those that make the head change direction rapidly.

For example:

Bouncing



Skipping



Jumping or
Step-ups



Spinning



Trampet ideas

- Jump
- Jump, lift knees up / kick feet out behind
- Star jump
- Jump and count / recite time tables / recite alphabet
- Throw a bean bag / ball at a target / into a bucket
- Throw a bean bag / ball to a person who is walking round the trampet
- Throw a bean bag / ball up in the air while counting
- Sequences of little and big jumps, eg 5 little, 1 big
- Change direction while jumping
- Jog and Hop
- Spotty dog march (homolateral marching)
- March, touching opposite hand / elbow with knee
- Bounce off trampet onto a crash mat / pile of cushions
- Jump while copying gestures
- Jump while following arrow chart with arm gestures

Other ideas

- Twirling dance ribbons. Can they copy a series of simple moves you model?
- Wheelbarrow walking
- Working though a simple obstacle course
- Jumping form a squat position and landing back in a squat position
- Clapping / dancing / marching to an upbeat song with a strong beat
- Jumping jacks
- Hop scotch

2. Organising

The second set of activities should be those that provide a motor challenge to the child.

For example:

- Funny walks: Animal walks.
- Egg and spoon walk
- Throw and catch while on a balance board
- Balance board, put bean bags around it.
Child picks up bean bags one by one, or in a certain order.
- Walk along a gym bench (could be upturned, with the child picking up bean bags and throwing them in a bucket)
- Pass bean bag round leg, behind back
- Log rolls, hands clasped & arms stretched out above head
- Infinity Walk: walk round 2 chairs, in and out in a figure of eight. Repeat with eyes closed
- Stand inside a hula hoop that is on the ground. Spin, without going outside the hoop. Stop, stand still. Press hands down on head.
- Bend a rope into different shapes. Walk along it. Jump over it from side to side
- Make scoops from plastic bottles, use to catch bean bags
- Obstacle courses: Go over and under a chair. Climb over a chair, through a hoop, then roll on a mat or the floor.
- Commando crawling.



Other ideas

- Wheelbarrow walking
- Working through a simple obstacle course you can make in the garden
- Jumping from a squat position and landing back in a squat position

3. Calming

The third set of activities should be those that calm the child: deep pressure, proprioceptive input, and heavy work

For example:

- Press-ups on a wall:
Count to 10. Repeat 3 times
- Press-ups on a wall: Upside down
Walk up the wall, put feet flat on the wall and count to 10 before walking down the wall.
Repeat 3 times.
- Half press-ups from the floor:
Push up from knees not from the feet.
- Isometrics and Chair sit ups
(see Isometrics on page 6)
- 'Steamroller squash':
Student lies on their stomach.
Roll a gym ball up and down,
pressing down hard.
Do not roll it over their head.
- Joint compression:
See page 6, Isometrics Number 4 "Extra Calming"
- Firm massage: any of back, hands, feet, and shoulders

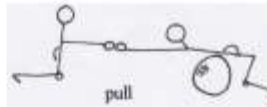


Other ideas

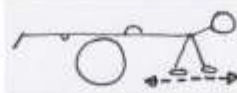
- Laying still to calming music
- Laying still and quietly counting to 100
- Laying under a blanket and being still
- Listening to story

Gym ball ideas for older students

1. Pull the student towards you.



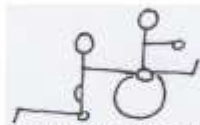
2. Student walks forward on their hands, then backwards.
The slower the better.



3. Roll over the ball fast and crash onto cushions or a crash mat.



4. You can hold the student at the hips to stabilise them while balancing on a ball.



5. Arch the back over a ball. A peanut ball is more stable than on a round ball.



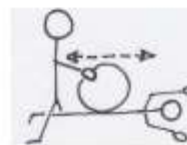
6. Movement averse students are happier on the ball against a wall.



7. 'Push against each other': Two students sit on either side of a ball, with their backs resting against the ball. When given the command, both push against the ball, each trying to dislodge the other student.



8. 'Steamroller': Student lies on their stomach. You roll ball up and down, pressing down hard. Do not roll it over their head.



Some extra ideas for younger children



- Crawl tunnel
- Waling on carpet spots



- Sitting on the yoga ball. Work up to throwing a beanbag for an adult to catch. Working up to throwing a ball into a large tub close by



- Strip of masking tape on the floor to practice walking in a straight line. Working up to making zig-zag lines etc



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- Rolling / passing / bouncing sensory balls